(b) if so, the reasons given by the journal;

(c) the reasons for rise in the prices of sugar in India when the world prices of sugar have been falling; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to bring down the prices of sugar in India?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) the reason given by the journal is that the international prices of sugar have been falling while the domestic prices are ruling high, therefore, there is sufficient profit margin for Indian traders to bring in foreign sugar.

(c) The domestic prices of sugar are not rising. A statement indicating the range of wholesale price of S-30 Grade of sugar in the principal markets of the country is enclosed (*See* below).

(d) Does not arise.

Statement

Range of wholesale prices of S-30 Grade Sugar in the four principal markets of the country for the financial year 1998-99 (upto February, 1999)

(Rs./Quintal)

Month	Range All (4 Markets)
April, 1998	1425—1590
May, 1998	1470—1615
June, 1998	1413—1610
July, 1998	1423—1600
August, 1998	1368—1625
September, 1998	1328—1620
October, 1998	1384—1600
November, 1998	1366—1570
December, 1998	1368—1590
January, 1999	1378—1600
February, 1999	1383—1600

Resentment among eminent Doctors/ Scientists

*257. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that resentment amongst doctors/ scientists in the country is rising day-by-day;

(b) whether it is a fact that a group of doctors led by well-known microbiologist, Prof. Asru K. Sinha, whose wonder drug, anticoplasin, found useful for cancer patients have decided to suspend their research project in Jadavpur University, as reported in the Hindustan Times, dated 22nd February, 1999; and

(c) if so, whether the Central Government would find out the reasons for stiff opposition to Indian scientists' endeavour referred to above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) This Ministry is aware of the news-item as reported in the Hindustan Times dated 22nd February, 1999. The Registrar, Jadavpur University has informed that Prof. A.K. Sinha has informed him that the Antineoplastin is an investigative agenda for cancer research. Its efficacy has been tested on animal model with cancer. Right now its efficacy is required to be tested on adult consenting human volunteers with terminal stage of cancer. The Department of Life Science & Bio-Technology Jadavpur University have intimated that they have no information since the concerned scientist has not reported or discussed his research work with Faculty of Council of Science, Department of Life Science and Bio-technology. The Drug Controller General of India has also not received any application for registration of this new drug as is mandatory under the Drug & Cosmetics

Rules. Further, Ministry of Science & Technology and the Indian Council of Medical Research have also not received any request for support of the research project.

Effect of Insecticides on Vultures

*258. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
SHRI RAGHAVJI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that due to increased use of insecticides, the number of vultures feasting on dead bodies of animals, particularly buffaloes, has decreased considerably all over the country;

(b) whether this fact has been confirmed by Dr. Anand R. Rehmani, President of the Faculty for Natural History;

(c) whether this fact was confirmed earlier also, by the Indian Council for Medical Research; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps proposed to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Dr. Asad R. Rahmani, Director, Bombay Natural History Society authored a report about the decline in the population of vultures due to increased use of insecticides/pesticides.

(c) and (d) The Indian Council for Medical Research has informed that they can not comment regarding decrease in the number of vultures feasting on buffaloes since their organisation covers the area of research on effects of pesticides on human beings.

The Bombay Natural History Society's report states that high levels of chemicals and pesticides are affecting the vulture populations throughout the country. Food shortage caused due to efficient utilisation of carcasses could be also one of the reasons for their decline. Presence of any avian disease is also not ruled out.

Lifting price control on Drug Industry

*259. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the domestic and multi-national pharma companies have demanded lifting of price control on the drug industry; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) and (b) The Pharmaceutical companies in the country — domestic and foreign, have been urging for relaxation of price controls on the drug industry. As announced by the Finance Minister in his speech of 27.2.1999 while presenting the Central Government's budget for 1999-2000, two high level Committees will be constituted inter alia to review the present drug policy so as to reduce the rigours of price control where they have become counter productive.

Pending cases in Environmental Courts

*260. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 480, given in the Rajya Sabha on the 26th February, 1999, and state the total number of cases pending, as on 31st December, 1998, State-wise, in Environmental Courts/Tribunals and the steps taken proposed to be taken to expedite speedy disposal of the same?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): The National Environment Appellate Authority was constituted under the National Environment Apellate Authority Act, 1997. There was no case pending with